

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION



PHOTOS BY DAN BUSHNELL AND JACK ZANTO

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION

Provides managerial, administrative support, information, computer, legal, and personnel services to all divisions of the department.

The Centralized Services Division (CSD) provides managerial and legal services to the department through the Director's Office. The division also manages all financial activities, contracting, and procurement; oversees personnel policies and functions; coordinates computer systems; performs public information and media relations tasks; produces publications and graphics materials; and provides general administrative support services. Support services include payroll, data entry, reception, and mail. Fiscal responsibilities include trust revenue collection and distribution, as well as bond and loan accounting.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, six CSD positions remained vacant in response to statewide budget shortfalls and a Special Legislative Session.

Personnel Bureau

The Personnel Bureau has been involved in a number of key human resource activities. For the past year, the conversion from Pay Plan 60 to Pay Plan 20 has been closely monitored and evaluated. DNRC is making a concerted effort to complete 100 percent of the performance appraisals; at present, the agency is close to 90 percent completion. Lastly, the training effort has embraced web-based learning. Employees can enjoy a number of unique training programs without ever leaving their work units.

Purchasing Bureau

The Purchasing Bureau established a variety of annual agreements for the procurement of goods and services that allow employees to contract directly with vendors and contractors. These agreements helped reduce the number of requisitions submitted from 420 in the previous fiscal year to 303 this fiscal year. These agreements provide field personnel with cost-efficient and expedient methods of procuring urgently needed commodities and services.

Competitive solicitations exceeding \$25,000 are now listed on the Internet, increasing competition and decreasing duplicating and mailing costs. Over 350 contracts, grants, and amendments (with a total value of over \$40 million) were reviewed for legal and fiscal compliance, and contractual requirements (such as liability insurance and workers compensation coverage) were monitored.

Bureau staff are working with other employees to improve the department's Loan and Grant System. Better tracking will help to ensure contractual compliance, fiscal monitoring, and renewal timing.

Bureau staff responded to various departmental matters such as the Leased Vehicle Program and the ProCard, which is a credit card for use by state employees. The ProCard manual was rewritten and posted on the DNRC website.

The bureau completely revised the department's purchasing and contracting manual to comply with recent legislative and legal mandates and to increase its effectiveness and ease of use for department employees. This manual is also posted on the DNRC website.

Bureau staff continue to monitor and report to management on a variety of possibilities for saving costs in such matters as cell phone usage and fire-related procurements.

Information Technology Bureau

In Fiscal Year 2003, the Information Technology Bureau (ITB) continued to meet the department's needs in public information, editing, graphic design, computer support, and software development. Agency demand for ITB services was stronger than ever over the past year. The department has discovered the necessity of an effective public information program, with requests for the services of the public information officer coming from across the department. In-house editing and graphics services continue to save the agency money and provide high-quality products. New, innovative, and cost-effective ways to use computers to perform state business are continually being found.

Highlights of ITB accomplishments over the past year are listed below.

- The public information officer developed an informative and fascinating set of displays that were exhibited in the Capitol Building rotunda during the 2003 Legislative Session. The displays informed legislators and the public of the wide range of services performed by DNRC, including noxious weed control, fire suppression, and water rights management.
- The editing and graphics staff prepared several publications for legislators, including the *DNRC Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2002* and reports on the *Reclamation and Development Grants Program* and the *Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program*.
- Over the past year, high-speed networking has become an issue in the DNRC field offices. With new, centralized systems going into production, such as the Trust Land Management System and the Water Rights System, field users are finding that high-speed network connections are essential for state business. High-speed data network connections were installed in Havre, Glasgow, Miles City, and Plains during Fiscal Year 2003.
- More in-house and outsourced software development took place in Fiscal Year 2003 than in any other year in the history of the department. The new Trust Land Management System went into production, Phase II of the Hazard Reduction Agreements System was completed, and a new Fire Protection Assessment System was developed and went into production.
- Bureau staff presented training in the use of the new Trust Land Management System to about 80 department employees in Helena, Billings, Lewistown, Missoula, and Kalispell.

Fiscal Bureau

Over 20,000 payments were processed during FY 2003 by the Fiscal Bureau, which also coordinated a variety of bond sales. One Coal Severance Tax Bond was sold, as well as General Obligation Bonds for the drinking water and wastewater programs. In addition, a General Obligation Bond was sold to provide loans to private entities for renewable resource projects.

More than 40,000 checks were received, deposited, and distributed within trust, federal, and state special revenue accounts, with total receipts of over \$200 million.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) auditors were on-site for a few weeks to audit financial activity associated with the fires of 2000. Fiscal staff assisted by providing documentation and answering questions.

A federal accounting pronouncement, called General Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 34, required many additional accounting transactions throughout the fiscal year. Although this bulletin was first implemented in FY 2002, further work will be undertaken annually to transact the necessary entries.

Bureau personnel visited field offices throughout the state to provide training in the state's financial software, including Manager Reports; the Statewide Accounting, Budgeting, and Human Resources System (SABHRS); and Document Direct software. CSD fiscal and ITB staff also visited various field offices, in conjunction with Trust Land Management Division (TLMD) staff, to train field personnel on how to process local bank deposits appropriately.

Bureau staff transitioned the department to the Standard Budget Module in SABHRS for FY 2004. Standard budgets will assist the department with budget administration and management.

The department's FY 2004 Indirect Cost Plan was submitted utilizing a new methodology, which will apply indirect costs to total department expenditures, including contracted services. Equipment and debt service, however, will not be included in the calculation of indirect costs.

Montana Power Authority

In 2001, the Montana Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 474, which (among other provisions) created the Montana Power Authority. This seven-member citizen board was appointed by the governor to provide or ensure the provision of reliable, affordable electrical energy to Montana consumers. The board was attached to DNRC for administrative purposes and staffed by DNRC and the Lt. Governor's Office. It continued to meet until the fall of 2002. In November of that year, voters passed IR 117, a referendum to reject HB 474, and the Montana Power Authority thereby went out of existence.

